

Co-chairs Senator McCrory and Representative Currey, Ranking Members Representative McCarty and Representative Berthel, and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

My name is Eli Jones and I am a resident of Waterbury, Connecticut. I am testifying in support of S.B. 1095: An Act Concerning School Resource Officers.

All students deserve to feel safe, secure, and supported in their places of learning. Yet too often our schools rely on policing to keep children in line, rather than funding professionals trained to deliver students necessary developmental and behavioral health resources.

Growing up in Waterbury, Connecticut, I've witnessed a lot of injustice within the police system. Many of the injustices I've seen were in the Waterbury public school systems. Policing in Waterbury schools is growing and largely unaccounted for with thousands of police-led interventions happening every year in school. These arrests increased drastically over the last decade, from 57 to almost 300. As a student at Westside Middle School I witnessed many of my peers getting arrested and detained. These experiences negatively impact a young child mind and condition them to fear authority, over-surveillance, and the normalization of violence. I remember coming to school late, and seeing a younger student getting dragged out in handcuffs. The cop behind him gave me a glare as he forced the young student out of the middle school. That glare was a reminder of my place in society. That reaffirms the school-to-prison pipeline, and the psychological terror young kids of color.

According to research by [Connecticut Voices for Children](#), there's no evidence School Resource Officers (SROs) make students or staff safer, but schools with SROs have more arrests and more expulsions than their peer institutions without SROs.

I strongly support S.B. 1095. I hope the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers will vote in favor of this bill. Together, we can build an educational system that centers the social-emotional well-being of students through care, resources, learning, and restoration.

Thank you for your time, Elijah Jones